

Communities Putting Prevention to Work (CPPW) Business Incentives for Healthy Food Project (BIP)

Using best practices of national models, building on the success of local initiatives and engaging community partnerships, the City of Seattle's Office of Economic Development (OED) will lead a project to increase the access of healthy food available in King County with a focus on the target community as defined in the CPPW grant. Target communities include South King County, Seattle Central District, and Southeast and Southwest Seattle. \$1.1 million will be used to create incentives for businesses to improve access and availability of healthy foods and beverages with a focus in the target areas. The program will be managed by OED and oversight will be provided by Public Health Seattle-King County.

Key outcomes of the project include:

- Increase availability of healthy food and beverage products in selected communities
- Increase in capacity of businesses to effectively participate in WIC/EBT
- Increase capacity of store owners to profitably sell healthy food
- Increase demand for healthy products in the participating businesses through marketing and improvement in overall shopping environment/experience – improve store appearance, lighting, merchandising
- Provide approximately 25 businesses with loans and/or technical assistance that increase access to healthy food.
- Leverage grant resources with outside resources approximately 2:1.

Role of the City of Seattle Office of Economic Development

Working with Public Health Seattle-King County, OED will oversee the development and implementation of the CPPW Business Incentives for Healthy Food Project (BIP) to increase access to healthy foods and beverages. The program will be countywide with particular emphasis in providing better access in CPPW focus communities in South King County, Seattle Central District, and Southeast and Southwest Seattle. OED will lead and manage the project by working closely with and coordinating with Public Health Seattle-King County, two community outreach/technical assistance organizations (Urban Food Link and Martin & Sanders Consulting, LLC) and the University of Washington Urban Design and Planning Department as well as work closely with the community organizations, other technical assistance providers, and lending agencies.

Specifically, OED will use the funding to:

- Develop an outreach strategy to most effectively engage convenience store owners and recruit them to participate in the program.
- Develop a business case that demonstrates profitable methods of increasing healthy food options in convenience stores.

- Develop a menu/package of specific incentives that food related businesses can use to improve access to healthy foods. The incentives will include 1) technical assistance in topics such as merchandising, inventory management, and marketing, 2) assistance with finding suppliers, and 3) financial incentives such as grants to businesses, rebates, or access to low-cost financing for working capital, purchasing equipment or completing store improvements.
- Develop a marketing strategy to drive customers to participating businesses that is integrated with the marketing work of the broader CPPW initiative.
- Work collaboratively with a variety of partners involved in the project including, TA team (Urban Food Link and Martin & Sanders Consulting, LLC and the University of Washington Urban Design and Planning Department), community organizations, local lending organizations, as well as the participating businesses in South King County, Seattle Central District, and Southeast and Southwest Seattle.
- Develop and manage a process for evaluating and approving individual business requests for participation in the program with the intent to maximize program impact.
- Coordinate with technical assistance providers to assess needs of participating food related businesses, match them with appropriate initiative services, or find other needed services, to support project goals.
- Work with community development financial institutions, to:
 - Create a lending referral network to connect food related businesses needing financing to lenders.
 - Develop specific products that encourage lenders to provide financial incentives to participating food related businesses such as interest rate buy downs, loan loss reserves, etc
- Work with oversight committee, comprised of Public Health Seattle-King County, Urban Food Link, Martin & Sanders Consulting, LLC, the University of Washington Urban Design and Planning Department, and the City of Seattle, to troubleshoot problems, recommend policy changes and integrate program with broader initiative.
- Work with oversight committee and PHAPDE program evaluation staff to establish an evaluation system for this project. Participate in developing data collection tools, and collecting and analyzing the data to evaluate changes made in the stores as needed.
- Promote BIP opportunities to food related businesses; including those in concert with OED's other business development efforts, such as the energy efficiency financing program that earmarks independent grocers.
- Assist food related business in navigating government permitting and licensing regulations to encourage and facilitate business development opportunities related to increasing access to healthy foods.

Budget

- \$1.1 million for grants, supplemental business technical assistance and incentive products for lenders.
- \$104,000 per year for OED – FTE to oversee and administer the BIP.